

# The Wine Guy's Wine Tasting Notes

January, 2009



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### **Hill of Content, 2004 Grenache/Shiraz, Clare Valley \$16.**

The producer was once my house wine due to its low cost and rich flavors. I haven't seen any in quite awhile so I jumped at purchasing it again. While the price has increased 30-40% it still offers deep rich flavors. They make other blends and I will be looking for more from this Australian producer.

### **Pio Cesare, 2000 Barbaresco, Piedmont, DOCG**

The Wine Spectator has rated the 2000 vintage of Nebbiolo grapes from the piedmont region of Italy at the unheard of 100 points. I had great expectations for this wine since Pio Cesare is one of the better producers. While the wine was very good the hype over this vintage left me slightly disappointed. The wine was certainly well-aged and had lost much of its tannins. It would have really been special if it were from any other vintage, but sometimes expectations overrule the actual wine.

### **Round Peak Vineyards, 2006 Chardonnay, Yadkin Valley \$16.**

This property in Mount Airy has recently changed hands, which takes away one of the interesting stories of ownership in the Yadkin Valley. Perhaps the new owners will bring unique tales to their efforts at Round Peak. The Chardonnay, however, is a fine example of what Yadkin Valley fruit can do. Well-balanced and not overly oaked, this is a wonderful compliment to any meal.

### **Sipino, 2006 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley**

Tasted at the new Noma Restaurant in downtown Winston-Salem. This is a new wine to me, but the restaurant manager is an old friend who has a deep knowledge of wine, and he gave me a hearty recommendation. This wine did not disappoint! It was very full-flavored and rich, which went very well with my Kobe meatloaf. It is always good to have knowledgeable staff at restaurants who can guide you to new experiences.



Bruce at the Hugel Tasting Room in Riquewihr, Alsace.

### **Thierry Germain, 2006 Domaine des Roches Neuves, Saumur Champigny, Loire Valley**

Since the Cabernet Franc grape produces a very smooth taste, I try to seek them out as much as possible. It is the red grape of the Loire Valley, and this one is right on the money. It's delicate, yet with a backbone from its big brother Cabernet Sauvignon. I wish that in 2009 we can get more Loire Valley whites and reds in our market.

### **Emmolo, 2006 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley \$13.**

The wine comes from the vineyard that formerly produced the Caymus wine, and went to the wife as a part of a divorce settlement. The wine is one of my favorites, yet the 2006 vintage is slightly more citrus-flavored than prior years. While I still like it, I hope that it will return to its former taste profile, which I prefer.

### **Elyse, 2003 Petite Sirah, Rutherford**

I've always said the Elyse wines need at least 5 years in the bottle, which is really the minimum. This 5-year-old wine is just hitting its stride and will continue to improve for years to come. Inky dark with a deep richness make this a wine that requires food to go along with it, preferably beef or lamb to match the heavy flavors.

### **Piper-Heidsieck, Brut, Champagne**

While I believe that Champagne should be opened throughout the year I have not missed opening a bottle for New Year's Eve since I was 15 (sorry mother). Many years ago Piper was the brand of choice from the Champagne region, but others have risen above it in recent years. What a shame! This is exactly what

Champagne should be; a bit acidic, but with deep flavors and surging bubbles.

**Louis Latour, 2002 Chassagne-Montrachet Les Chenevottes 1er Cru**

If this 6-year-old Chardonnay isn't at its peak, I can't wait to try it again. Perfect balance with layers of flavor. What an outstanding wine.

**Raylen Vineyards, 2006 South Mountain Chardonnay**

**Flint Hill, 2006 Synergy**

**Flint Hill, 2006 Chambourcin**

**Flint Hill, 2006 Syrah**

**Simonet, 2007 Sparkling Cremant Blanc de Blanc, Burgundy**

New Year's Eve was celebrated at the Century Kitchen/Flint Hills Vineyard. Our evening began and ended with the Piper and Latour wine described above. Flint Hill was serving a Raylen white wine because of the 2007 Easter freeze which ruined all of their white grapes. The South Mountain is made by Steve Shepard at Raylen from fruit grown in Morganton and is consistently one of the finest Chardonnays in North Carolina. The Synergy is a blend of 80% Syrah and 20% Viognier. It is common to add about 5% Viognier to the red-based wines in the Rhone Valley, but I have never had such a large portion. It actually worked very well matched-up with a Roasted Duck Salad. The Chambourcin is one of my favorite East Coast grapes and Flint Hill's is very good. It even paired well with their Pan Seared Salmon. Our third course was a Petite Filet Mignon paired with the 100% Syrah. I asked if I could have another taste of the Synergy to compare with the Syrah. I actually preferred the Synergy, but with the Filet, the full Syrah was clearly the winner. With dessert we had the Simonet, a Chardonnay-based Cremant, which was a pleasant conclusion to a terrific wine dinner.

**Cono Sur, 2007 Pinot Noir, Valle Central, Chile \$9.**

When I first tasted this wine I wasn't expecting much because I had never had a Pinot Noir from Chile. Well, I should know better than to take that attitude because this is a very pleasant wine. At this price I don't think you can do better anywhere.